

A M E D I T A T I O N

(IN TIME OF SICKNESS)

At the O L D F O U N D E R Y,

Whilst the Rain was pouring through the Roof.

THIS tott'ring Fabric, with its mould'ring walls,
Its beams decay'd, bent rafters, shatter'd roof;
Minutely paints, exactly represents
My poor, my frail, my weak, and earthen Frame!
O all-corroding, all-consuming Time!
What Dome, what Tow'r, what Temple, sacred Shrine,
Could e'er resist thy rage!—The maffy bar,
The gates of solid brags before thee melt;
Yea, adamantine rocks do moulder down!—
What now remains of antient *Babylon*,
(*Chaldea's* boast) its gardens rais'd aloft,
And all the grandeur of its haughty King!
What now is seen of *Egypt's* Pyramids,
Where Monarchs lay embalm'd in regal state;
Those Piles, which cover'd acres with their base,
And pierc'd the clouds with their aspiring tops!
Where's now that Fane, the wonder of the world,
Which once in splendor stood on *Zion's* Hill;
Erected there by *Solomon* the wise,
And dedicated to the great I AM!
Where now those Priests, old *Levi's* hallow'd sons,
Who there in order stood, at God's command,
The altar 'tending, offering Sacrifice,
The shadowy Type of HIM that was to come!
Those Prophets too, those holy men of God,
The Heralds of the great ETERNAL KING,
Who warn'd the Nations, that transgress'd his laws,
Of dangers near impending o'er their heads;
And in his name declar'd, of peace, or war;
Are these all gone?—Are these cut down by Time?—
Yes,—e'en the man, who warn'd a rebel-world,
And preach'd for twice the space of threescore years;
Who then took ship, and fail'd o'er mountain tops,
Securely fail'd, and so outliv'd the Flood:
E'en HE is gone; and 'midst its parent Earth
No atom of his dust can now be seen;
No, not discern'd by microscopic eye!—
Within *these* ragged walls, as Fame records,
Here stood the Men, the Messengers divine,
The Gospel-heralds, who, in JESU's name,
Proclaim'd the terms of free, of lasting peace;
And offer'd pardons to the listening throng:
Ambassadors for GOD, they dared to speak
With holy boldness, yet with godly awe;
For, well they knew that they themselves were men,
Yea, pardon'd rebels, once had been in arms.
These too have ceas'd to speak, have ceas'd to act;
And all in turns have now their exit made.—
But do they cease to live, or cease to be?—
Are they who trod this stage of busy life,
And others bade to look beyond the grave
With pleasing hopes of immortality;
Are *these* deceiv'd?—or, what is more absurd,
Reduc'd to nothing?—What!—to be no more!—
Sure common-sense abhors the shocking thought!—

Can man, endu'd by God with Reason's gift,
Can *man* suppose, or even dare to think,
That souls so wisely form'd, that *thinking* souls,
Which bore the stamp of Him from whom they sprung,
Shall wholly vanish, and exist no more!—
Annihilation!—Ha!—How strange a word!
The sacred page, I'm sure, records it not:
'Twas hatch'd in hell; 'twas nurtur'd by the fiends;
And Satan introduc'd it to the light.
He first told *Eve* her children should be GODS;
And *them* he tells that they shall cease to be.
Be gone!—thou foul, thou subtle, crafty foe;
A liar sure thou art; thy lure I spurn;
Since Reason and the Scriptures clearly prove
That Immortality belongs to man.—
'Tis true, this body sleeps in dust awhile,
And mingles with the clay from whence 'twas form'd;
Yet, rise again it shall to bliss or woe.
To bliss the just shall rise, and shine as stars,
As brilliant stars, in glory's firmament;
Whilst others rise to everlasting shame,
And then are banish'd to the dark abyfs.
When Angel-heralds, waiting on their Lord,
In order stand, with trumps prepar'd to sound;
And one shall swear that *Time shall be no more*;
'Tis then the WISE, who turn'd from Error's ways
The giddy fools, far wand'ring from their GOD,
And brought them back to hear the Shepherd's voice:
'Tis then they'll shine, and hear JEHOVAH say,
“Come hither, sons, receive your full reward,
And live with me, whilst I myself exist.”—
And is it so?—Shall I revive again?—
Shall ev'ry atom of this curious frame,
This casket of the soul, be gather'd up,
And bear the glorious image, stamp divine?—
It shall:—it must:—for, my Redeemer lives:—
He conquer'd Death:—through him I'll conquer too;
And in my flesh I shall behold my GOD.
Then blow ye winds; let rain and hail descend;
Let Earth's foundation shake, with all its Tow'rs,
Its Cities great, its Towns, and Structures fair;
The work of ages, and the pride of Kings:
This body too may crumble into dust,
Or lie forgotten in the silent tomb;
A house I have, not built by mortal hands,
A mansion bright, eternal in the skies.
My title to it now I read by faith,
Which gives a clearer, more extensive view,
Than all the Tubes Astronomers can frame.
Yes, faith gives me to see that solid rock,
The ROCK of Ages, which shall me support
Amidst the thund'rings of an angry GOD;
The wild, the dread dismay of Infidels,
And all the horrid crash of burning Worlds!—

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